

THE
MINISTER'S HEAD—*dressed*

According to Law;

OR,

1508/1665.

A WORD OF COMFORT

TO

HAIR-DRESSERS IN GENERAL,

RESPECTING

THE POWDER-PLOT

OF

1795.

BY A ROUND HEAD.

Sick of thy *Taxes*, while the wearied Nation
Drags her last Penny forth, and fears *Starvation*,
See Groups of *Hair Dressers* all idle stand—
A melancholy—mute—and mournful Band!

Peter Pindar

L O N D O N :

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1795.

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MINISTERS OF THE
 AD-AMIRALTY
 15 FEB 07



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1795.

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P R E F A C E.

THE *puffers* of administration were exceedingly active, about the sixth instant, (when the penalty of 20l. attached on wearing hair-powder without a certificate) in trumpeting through the ministerial papers, that upwards of 11,000l. had been received, within the preceding day or two, at the certificate office in Somerset-place, and 4,000l. at the office in Lombard-street. Though these sums make but a small progress towards the *estimate*, in the Minister's Budget, of the *produce* of the tax, the reasons of their falling in at the time above mentioned, is too obvious to remark, and was too mean to have been made a handle of for boasting.

But why were not the *ministerial puffers* equally active to acquaint the public—*what sums*

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were

PREFACE.

were received for hair-powder certificates, at different intervals *between* the 5th of May (when the act, strictly speaking, commenced) and the 5th instant, or what had been the *sum total* received, at the two offices specified, during the whole of that month? Their silence on these heads gave room for suspicion, that the tax, on its very outset, fell far short of expectation, and induced the writer of the subsequent pages to become active in his own enquiries into the subject.

From some fortunate connections and opportunities he ascertained circumstances, stated in this publication, which he presumes to think, may assist in enabling the public to form a tolerable judgment of the degree of *produce* and *existence*, which so very *extraordinary* a *tax* is likely to experience—at least such is the wish and hope of their humble servant.

THE AUTHOR.

London, June 17, 1795.



THE

THE
MINISTER'S HEAD—*dressed*;

OR,

A WORD OF COMFORT

TO

HAIR-DRESSERS IN GENERAL, &c.

GENTLEMEN—PROFESSORS
OF THE ART—CAPITAL.

AS the *minister* hath *un-dressed*, by his *hair-powder tax*, the *heads* of nine tenths of the good people of this country—cares not a fixpence for the *heads* of all the *hair-dressers* in the kingdom—and would, no doubt, be *cordially* inclined to clap the *head* of the present humble writer into a *string* or the *pillory*, by all the principles of *retaliation* it is fair to attempt to give *his* head as *complete a dressing*, as *law* and *art* will admit.

That this *minister* should not hesitate, by his late extraordinary tax, to form his principal attack against the *heads* of the FAIR SEX (inasmuch as *dress* is more peculiarly *their* study and element) is not much to be wondered at; since it is so notoriously known that he is equally unwilling and unable to assail them in a *less exposed quarter*—or, according to the witticism of the manly SHERIDAN—“that all such matters are utterly *unintelligible* to him.”—Never, never will our mighty *financier* absent himself from parliament through the influence or attraction of a *honey-moon*—never, never open a *connubial budget*—never, never perform the duties (even like a brother minister) of the “*home department*.”

But that the *minister* should venture to attack the heads of MEN, is indeed a matter of some surprise; since another sort of *constitutional frigidity* induces him, like Ulysses of old, to prefer combating (in *personal* assailments) with *words*, rather than engage with *weapons* of a more dangerous construction:—or, to speak more suitably with the stile of our present subject—he would much rather pay a
thousand



thousand guinea-tax to use *hair powder*, than have his nerves shook, in contest out of *parliament*, with the horrible sound and concussion of *powder* of an opposite colour. In good truth, the minister possesses so much *philosophy*, on all occasions of *personal assault*, that with true christian patience and resignation he submits to and bears, for the *public good*, the most pointed invective that can be levelled at him.

But the minister, perhaps, was willing to try, by way of experiment, how patiently also the *males* would suffer a twig by the *hair*—not actually by his own hand (for *that* even his favorite *port*, drunk to *inebriety*, would not rouse in him sufficient spirit to do) but virtually by the operation of an act of parliament, as the *prelude* to a *poll-tax*, that may involve *every head* in the kingdom. Another year's continuance of the present blessed war, will show this to be more than a chimerical idea—and render the adoption of still more extraordinary *ways* and *means* an absolute work of necessity for supporting it.

Wearing

Wearing *powder* was stiled a *luxury* by the Minister's *majority-men*—so is washing the face and shaving the beard—and on the very same principle, therefore, may, and most probably *will* become objects of *taxation*, should the *financier* still remain an obstinate enemy to peace.—Mr. Fox gave some opposition to the hair-powder bill—but should the luxuries of *face-washing* and *shaving* be proposed to be taxed, it is to be feared *Charles* will feel no *natural* inclination to resist the motion—especially as his good friends the *Israelites* make as little use as himself of *soap* or the *razor*.—If kings' ministers could be allowed to possess any principle of the old fashioned monitor *conscience*, there might be some hope, indeed, that the luxury of *shaving* might escape the *financier's* fang, from a full conviction, that he has well nigh *close-shaved* the whole nation already.

There is a tax, however, often suggested to our *powder-plotting* helmsman, and that undoubtedly would prove *productive* in more senses than one, to which he constantly turns a deaf ear—I mean a tax on *bachelors*. At an era, when the most bloody and impolitic of wars

wars has so dreadfully thinned the ranks of our armies, an increased stimulus to *marriage* is absolutely expedient for recruiting the heavy loss. Our PRINCE, indeed, hath set the example—but he must be a wise statesman who can persuade the *Minister* to second it!—or devise any stimulus that can possibly prick him on to attempt to raise *matrimonial recruits*. Reflecting therefore, most probably, that if he proposed from his budget a bill for *taxing bachelors*, he would be *naturally* subjected to a thousand sarcasms on the occasion; he of course is hostile to a mode of revenue, which he is certain must ever prove a tax on himself, and which is so inimical to his own *constitutional antipathies*.

If it be true, according to a trite observation,—“that people’s ears *tingle*, when others, out of company, are talking of them,” the Minister’s head, dressed or undressed, sleeping or waking, must unremittingly experience it. And if such sensations of a *ringing in the ears*, can convey any sympathetic ideas of the nature of such absent discourse, he must everlastingly be impressed with sounds very remote to those

those of *blessings* on his head, or *prayers* for his prosperity.—From the thousands, whom he has compelled to take out certificates for the liberty of *wearing powder* , it cannot rationally be supposed a single blessing has been extended him; because, in temporal matters, neither *prayers* nor *blessings* are bestowed, when they are expensive to the donor.

But not so is the case respecting ebullitions of *dissatisfaction* and *resentment* . The myriads, who have been excluded, by the operation of the 20*l.* penalty, from appearing (in their own opinions at least) as neat, clean, handsome and attractive, as when they wore *powder* , will to a man, woman and child—single or married—old or young, vent execrations at the author of so malicious a tax. It may not be unentertaining, perhaps, to consider for a moment, what sort of punishment various classes of the community, that are thus deprived of their accustomed stile of dress, would be likely to inflict on the Minister, had they both the opportunity and power.

Such *grey* heads, as cannot now afford to hide the ravages of time, will naturally wish him all the wrinkles and infirmities of age—*Red* heads (though golden locks of yore were deemed most beautiful) would willingly set the Minister's powdered head in a *blaze*—The whole body of *half pay officers*, for the odious *exception* he has made, by subjecting them to the penalty, though so much less able to pay the tax than officers on full pay, who are exempted from it, would have little hesitation to resume their lain-up *pikes*, and salute him, *feelingly*, with their *points*—hundreds of clerks, who *must* wear powder, or be discharged from employ in offices under government, would level, if they dared, the whole artillery of their *pens*, *pounce boxes*, and *ink-stands* at his sconce—mantua makers and milliners, who erst, on a Sunday, were wont to appear, so *lady-like* about the head, would gladly transfix him with their *pins* and *bodkins*—apothecaries apprentices dose him with *jallap*—taylor's give him *goose*—shoemakers plunge their *awl*, up to the hilt, in his b—,—dustmen and scavengers flog him at their *cart's tail*—chimney sweeps, erst so powdered on *May*
C
day,

day, buffet him with their *foot-bags*—chamber maids toss him in a blanket—waiters chuck him out of a tavern window, and forget to charge him in the bill—and as to the whole fraternity of *hair-dressers*, they would, indisputably, have as great right to attempt to blind him with the dust of their *powder-puffs*, as he has endeavoured, for many years, to throw *dust* into the eyes of all the good people of old England.

Thousands of curses will monthly, weekly, daily and hourly be poured forth, in all quarters of the kingdom, against this same *powder-taxing* Minister.—If a *lover*, unable to pay the guinea, is discarded by his mistress for not appearing in her eyes so agreeable as heretofore, he will swear that it was for want of having his hair dressed with *powder*, and di—mn the Minister accordingly.—If a *doctor*, willing to save the guinea, finds his physical consequence decline, he will attribute it to wearing an *unpowdered wig*, and curse the Minister most heartily.—If a magistrate, not finding it agreeable to his conscience to encourage, in his own person, the tax for the support

support of the war, feels his dignity and respect lessened, he will naturally ascribe it to the disuse of *powder*, and vent execration upon execration against the Minister. In short—thousands of miscarriages in life will be put down, right or wrong, to personal consequence being lessened from inconveniency to conform to the tax; and of course as many *anathemas* levelled at the Minister's head, as ever a *pope* of Rome thundered against infidels.

From the *constitutional antipathy*, above intimated, of our *powder-plotter* towards the fair sex, there is much reason to suppose, that this attack of *their heads* was designed intentionally from other motives, than that of proving a productive article of revenue. But be this as it may, clear it is, that the *female part* of the community are far more principally affected by the tax than the men; since on the embellishments of dress, which are assiduously studied and practised for the ends of rendering nature's charms more attractive, women rest so essential a part of their success and happiness in life in their attainment of *husbands*. This is so undeniable a fact, that although many

ladies become flatterns *after marriage*, they are exceedingly attentive to cultivate all the allurements of dress, and to appear, to use a common phrase, “*powdered up to the eyes*,” in the presence of their admirers, *before* the happy knot is tied.

Besides, as there is an universal rage known to reign among the female world for appearing in the *fashion*, and that too from the *throne* to the *cottage*, the obstructing nine tenths of women from indulging in a stile of dress, which they conceive renders them more captivating, was equally cruel and malicious in the Minister. He ought to be content, one should think, in having plenty of foes, railers, and condemners among the *men*—but to make, for the foregoing reasons, almost all the *women* in the nation his *enemies* too, is a situation to which no wise man, much less a gallant one, could ever wish to reduce himself.

As the Minister does not frequent women’s company, it is but charitable, therefore, to inform him that the *hair-powder tax* has absolutely rendered him an object of detestation by the
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the sex in general. The following is a specimen of the ejaculations of rage, which are, no doubt, daily vented against him in various shapes, and infinite in number, by those ill-treated fair ones, who are either unable or unwilling to pay the tax.

“ Mercy on us, sister Fanny, how horrible
 “ we look *without powder!*—I cannot bear to
 “ view myself in the glass!—Lost to our own
 “ admiration, how can we longer hope to at-
 “ tract the eyes, and rivet the hearts of men!
 “ —O Fanny, never shall we get husbands on
 “ account of this abominable *powder-bill!*—
 “ may all the plagues in Egypt fall on the
 “ head of the odious Minister that devised it.”
 —“ Ay ”——subjoined Fanny——“ And if
 “ ever a woman, to save *his* character, be
 “ mean enough to marry him, may he be hor-
 “ rified by every powdered fop of his ac-
 “ quaintance!”

The above, it may fairly be concluded, is but one of the many thousand execrations, hourly ejaculated throughout the kingdom at *him*, who has *un-powdered* such an infinity of heads.

heads. As for the immense multitude of *hair-dressers*, whom his *act* hath reduced, as well as their families to beggary, *that* is a consideration which sits very easy on the heart of the Minister, while he is feasting, from an accumulation of places, on the fat of the land—or rather on the hard earnings of the industrious, groaning under a load of fresh taxes for supporting a most bloody and ruinous war. But when the cup of *ministerial oppression* is full, from still more taxes, for a still further continuation of the war, and *that consummation* takes place, which thousands can foresee, without meriting the imputation of *mad prophets*, the body of HAIR-DRESSERS, respectable both from number and profession, will not be the last description, most likely of the people, who will forget their sufferings and the gratitude they owe the *poll-taxing financier*.

But it is time to have done *dressing* the Minister's head, and to advert to what is likely to be the fate of the hair-powder tax, in point of *produce* and *existence*.—And here I shall not hesitate to say, from some *internal* facts which have come to my knowledge, that notwithstanding

standing all the *external* artifices made use of—and all the newspaper puffs, in the ministerial prints, to induce the public to believe the tax exceedingly *productive*, and of course *popular*, that it is in reality in a much less prosperous state than represented, and forebodes, from alarming symptoms, to be extremely short lived.

Some of the prostituted prints have had the effrontery to assert, that above 300,000*l.* has already been received from the tax—and that *double* that sum will be the produce of it.—The latter part of this assertion is stamped with the word *LIE* on the very face of it—from the obvious reason, that four-fifths, at least, of those who intended to pay the tax, necessarily took out their certificates *prior* to the *fifth* instant, when the *penalty* of the *act* was to commence. Therefore by far the most principal amount of the tax would assuredly be received *before* and not *after* such commencement; for as to the subsequent bill, which has passed, allowing *further time* to take out certificates, *that* matter was not publicly known to be in contemplation on the 5th instant, and
of

of course could have no operation to induce delay.

No absurdity, then, can be more gross to suppose, nor *lie* more palpable to assert, than that the sum likely to be received, *after* the date, when the public understood the penalty to have commenced, will *double* the sum received *antecedent* to it.

But the *additional act*, allowing *further time* to obtain certificates, is one of the strong symptoms, that the tax is not of so hale a constitution as the *state physician* would make us believe. One of the *tontine* artifices, on survivorship schemes, to *take in* more dupes, is to issue *new advertisements* for *prolonging the time* of closing the subscription—that is—subscribers not having been so *numerous* as they expected within the first-announced period, the *schemers* extend the date to entice more gudgeons to their net.—Equally *gracious* is our *powder-plotter* by allowing *further time* to obtain *certificates*.—Methinks I hear him say —“Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, and deposit your *guinea*—for though you were threatened with

with a heavy penalty, for violating the act after the 5th instant, no door shall be now open to *informers* until the 24th of July—So pray be so kind, condescending, and obliging as to think better of my tax—become subscribers to it and take out certificates.”

It is a *manœuvre* with one or two theatrical characters, whom the author has heard of, when they issue their *box benefit tickets*, to commence *numbering* of them with 300—instead of No. 1—by this stroke of *policy*, the person who gets the first ticket issued—viz.—No. 300, is induced to believe, that the night of performance will be brilliantly attended, from 300 box tickets having already (in appearance) been disposed of—and promulgates it accordingly to the benefit and credit of the party concerned.

It is shrewdly suspected, from some circumstances, which cannot be mentioned, consistently with confidence reposed, that more than one clerk, in issuing *hair powder certificates*, has (*by order*) adopted the above *manœuvre*—and commenced *numbering* with 10,001.—

Mr. Editor, therefore, of a government print, (who, as one of the *ministerial corps*, is expected to wear *powder*, and pay his *guinea*) noticing that the *number* of his certificate exceeds TEN THOUSAND, forms, in consequence, a wonderful opinion of the *produce* of the tax. Then calculating that there are at least thirty clerks employed in the principal offices in London for issuing *hair powder certificates*, and multiplying *each* of their account books by 10,000 (without having the least idea of the *manœuvre* above intimated) conceives 300,000*l.* to have been already received from the tax, in the metropolis, and that double the sum will accrue from it, when the offices throughout the kingdom make their returns. Under this impression, or rather deception, from artifices practiced to impose on public credulity, *puffs* upon *puffs* are daily vented through the ministerial prints, in order to induce a belief, that the tax is no less *productive* than *popular*.

But with juster confidence can the writer of these pages advance, on the credit of a very respectable acquaintance, who is recently returned from a considerable tour through the kingdom,

kingdom, that in several principal cities and country towns, not one in an hundred of the inhabitants now wear powder—and that in the lesser towns, parishes, and villages, scarce any encourage the tax, excepting those that hold official employments under government, such as magistrates, revenue officers, &c.

From some opportunities of ascertaining the fact, the writer can further advance, that the receipts hitherto in *five counties*, and they not the smallest, do not altogether amount to 15,000*l.*—So that if the other counties of the kingdom are to be rated on a similar scale, the tax will fall much short of the sanguine expectations of the *Minister* and his *satellites*—and its reign, of course, likely to be a very short one.

But there is a consideration that will very materially operate, in point of *drawback* from the produce of this tax—and that is the great *diminution* of the revenue arising from the quantity of *hair-powder* and *perfumes*, used prior to the late extraordinary tax, above that which is consumed since the passing of it. It is

is not too much to say—that the *decrease* of duties on those articles will, at least, be as *ten to one*.—In proof of this, is the notoriety what immense quantities of *hair-powder* and *per-fumes* have already come to the *hammer*—particularly at some late auctions at Robins's rooms, Covent-garden—when those articles were considered to be now such *drugs*, as to sell for two-thirds under what was their value *antecedent* to the late act.—This *drawback*, therefore, will be a weighty one, and must render the new hair-powder tax infinitely less productive than at first conceived, and more and more operate against an extension of its existence.

I shall conclude this address with the following observations. To tax *hair-powder*, heavily in the first instance, as an article of *consumption*, and then more heavily tax the *use* of it, was reserved to crown the deeds of our *immaculate Minister*.—On this *new principle* of effecting *ways* and *means* to support the war, we shall next, perhaps, not only pay the duty on *candles*, but have an act of parliament ordaining a tax of a guinea per annum, on each family, for liberty to *burn them*—not only pay the duties
on

on tea, coffee, &c. but a guinea also per annum for liberty to *drink them*. This mode of taxation may be carried on *ad infinitum*, for the liberty of *using* a thousand various articles of consumption *already taxed*, if the "*Swinish Multitude*," will hereafter submit to groan under still further burthens and afflictions, which the obstinacy, presumption, ignorance, and corrupt influence of the most profligate of M—— may dare to heap on a long abused nation,

I am, Gentlemen, &c.

A ROUND HEAD.

London, June 17. 1795.

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A ROUND HEAD

London, June 17. 1753